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Green Screen Effects in Photo Booth and iChat

Thursday, October 22 2009
By: **chrisb**

My Trip to France

Tonight I took a quick trip to France to see the Eiffel Tower. Or did I? "Green Screen" effects are used on TV and movies to allow characters to be in any setting. Now, you can have the same "Green Screen" effects in Photo Booth and iChat and you don't even need the green screen.

You have the ability to make pictures or movies in Photo Booth showing you in places you have never been. And even more fun, you can use the effect in iChat to make it seem like you are chatting from somewhere else. How about taking a photo of your office and using that background while you are really at the beach?



In Photo Booth, click on the Effects button and in iChat choose Video / Show Video Effects from the menu bar and then choose Video / Video Preview.

In both applications you will first see some basic effects-- Black and White, X-Ray, Glow, etc. But go to the 3rd page of effects and you get to the green screen effects. Page 3 contains eight built-in effects, some are movies and some are still shots. You can tell which effects are "green screen" by the person outline over the background

The trick to not needing a green screen is to step out of the frame for a few seconds while your Mac determines the background. Then it replaces the real background with the fake one you chose. You step back into the frame and there you are in Paris, on a roller coaster, under water or in space-- or where ever you choose to be.

Replacing the background is a neat trick, but there are a few tips to get the best results:

- Use as plain a real background behind you as you can. The busier the background, the harder it is for your Mac to tell you from the background.
- Have as much light behind you and in front of you as possible. I found that lighting is a huge key to making the effect work well.

If you don't have enough light or too busy of a background, you will get "artifacts" in your

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picture. Either part of the real background will show through the effect or parts of you will be missing and replaced by the fake background.

If the eight built in effects are not enough for you, you can go to page 4 of the effects page and there are eight more wells where you can drag and drop your own photos or movies. Looking at the other Effects pages, there are a few more "green screen" effect backgrounds scattered around

Have fun pretending to be where you aren't!

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